

EQUALITY POLICY AND DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME FOR 2013-2016

Introduction

Larkmead School is committed to ensuring that all people connected with the school i.e. students, staff, parents, other visitors and governors are treated fairly regardless of gender, race, religion and disability.

The school recognises it has to make special efforts to ensure that all groups prosper including:

- Boys and girls, men and women;
- All minority ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
- Students and others with special educational needs (SEN);
- Students and others with a range of disabilities;
- Children looked after and their carers.

We identify individuals and groups of students on intake and track their progress on a regular cycle.

The school has identified the following issues that may be barriers to effective learning and successful working at the school:

- Low self esteem, low expectations and peer group pressure;
- Experience of bullying, harassment or social exclusion;
- Low income leading to difficulty in participating in some aspects of school life and no adequate home study space;
- Low parental support or different parental expectations;
- Frequent moves and lack of stability in life leading to time out of school or low attendance;
- Lack of help (i.e. accepting or receiving) with emotional, mental and physical well-being and poor behaviour including exclusions;
- Language difficulties;
- SEN;
- Lack of physical access to school facilities or services;
- Inappropriate curriculum;
- Recruitment, management and development of staff and governors.

The school recognises that it has a legal obligation under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to meet the needs of people with disabilities even if it requires giving them more favourable treatment. This policy has been adapted from the Local Authority (LA) model policy.

	Strategies for Equality	Disability Equality Scheme Plan
	The school has identified the following strategies that are specifically designed to address those issues	To be implemented during the life of this document
1.	<p>Establishing, maintaining and developing a school culture and ethos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The school is committed to celebrating diversity and equality in many ways, in particular by recognising the uniqueness of every individual, as reflected in the school prospectus and on its website.</i> • <i>Information on disability is collected through the admissions process.</i> • <i>We celebrate achievement for both academic success and for contributions to the school community by giving verbal and written praise, issuing merits and sending home letters of commendation for good work culminating in our Rewards Presentation Evenings for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.</i> • <i>We promote positive attitudes towards disabled people by having an open admissions policy and including all students in all activities.</i> • <i>We promote positive attitudes towards people of different ethnic groups/religions etc.</i> • <i>We involve students, parents and staff through our Parent Teacher Association (Lark Rise), the Student Voice and the governing body.</i> • <i>We promote high expectations through celebrating achievement</i> • <i>We communicate behaviour expectations through modelling good behaviour, having a clear and explicit behaviour policy, continually monitoring and collating data collected on behaviour within the school which is subsequently published regularly in the Staff Newsletter.</i> • <i>We ensure that we welcome applications for school places and jobs from all sections by having a comprehensive, non-selective intake. Advertisements for jobs state that there are no barriers to job applications as we adhere to Oxfordshire County Council Equal Opportunity Policies.</i> • <i>We provide more favourable treatment for disabled students in our break and lunchtime support arrangements.</i> 	<p><i>Keep a clear picture of who our disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school are, in the knowledge that people may be reluctant to disclose some disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>Employees of Larkmead School are made aware of this document.</i></p> <p><i>Disabled users of the school are made aware that they may approach the working party at any time and confidentially discuss any barriers they perceive to equality. If appropriate this document will be amended to reflect needs.</i></p> <p><i>Liaise with the LA over the gathering of information.</i></p> <p><i>Member of LT with SENCO to set up working party in conjunction with the chair of the Student Welfare sub-committee of the governing body.</i></p>

<p>2. Preventing and dealing effectively with bullying and harassment</p> <p>Recognising that the groups covered in this policy are more vulnerable to bullying and harassment, the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>communicates to students, parents and staff its abhorrence of all forms of bullying and harassment through overt example, the anti-bullying policy and the peer mentoring scheme.</i> • <i>has 'students causing concern' as an agenda item for pastoral and Teaching Assistant (TA) SEN meetings.</i> • <i>ensures that incidents are reported and addressed swiftly and effectively.</i> 	
<p>3 Listening to students, staff, parents and others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Students are encouraged to express their views during Personal Development Curriculum (PDC) lessons.</i> • <i>The school hears the student voice through its Student Voice representatives.</i> • <i>The school actively seeks staff views and listens to staff concerns through the annual Well Being Survey; the results of which are analysed by school teams, departments and faculties and action plans constructed and embedded into development plans.</i> • <i>The school seeks the views of parents through parent/teacher consultations, Lark Rise, weekly staff newsletters and termly news magazines to parents.</i> • <i>The school encourages, enables and hears the full range of views including those with disabilities by taking the advice of the LA.</i> 	<p><i>TAs to work with a group of disabled students to establish their views.</i></p> <p><i>Seek views from SEN Support Services to get the full picture on disability.</i></p> <p><i>Continue to seek advice from Premises development committee.</i></p>
<p>4. Equalising opportunities</p> <p>Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are likely to be economically disadvantaged, the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ensures school uniform is affordable by avoiding expensive clothing such as blazers and by exerting a levy on the price of jumpers to subsidise those who cannot afford them;</i> • <i>purchases uniform for identified families;</i> • <i>avoids putting parents under unnecessary financial pressure by offering subsidies for</i> 	<p><i>Youth Club for students with SEN began in February 2008</i></p>

<p><i>certain activities e.g. ingredients for Food Technology.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>promotes the take-up of extra-curricular opportunities by subsidising activities particularly during Activities Week and providing a number of activities free.</i> • <i>ensures provision of after school buses for outlying villages to enable students to attend after school activities and complete detentions if necessary in accordance with the Larkmead School Behaviour Policy.</i> • <i>widens access to careers advice and work experience placements through the involvement of the Connexions PA2 worker who has a brief to advise families with students who are disabled or who have SEN. PA2 is invited to and present at Annual Review Meetings of Statemented students in years 9,10 and 11 and into years 12 and 13 if appropriate.</i> • <i>Provides further education establishments with relevant information for student career progression.</i> 	
<p>5. Informing and involving parents and carers</p> <p>Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to find school intimidating, strange or inaccessible, the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>explains how it operates through its prospectus, information evenings for parents and its website.</i> • <i>offers a range of ways of communicating between school and parents that meet parents' circumstances and needs through telephone contact or e-mail with form tutor, parent evenings and use of interpreter for annual review and LAC meetings.</i> • <i>actively encourages parents to attend consultation evenings by Directors of Learning (DoLs) telephoning the parents/carers of non-attendees or by making alternative arrangements where necessary.</i> • <i>has created designated parking spaces for disabled drivers.</i> • <i>ensures that parents understand how well their child is progressing through regular progress checks, end of year report and Target Setting Days.</i> • <i>explains how parents can help their child at home e.g. homework booklets for all years and KS3/KS4 information evenings.</i> • <i>explains how parents and others can help in school by joining Lark Rise.</i> • <i>encourages parents to join Lark Rise and the governing body by regular announcements in the school newsletter and at social activities.</i> 	<p><i>Check that 'absent parents' receive communication</i></p> <p><i>Continue to address issue of discovering the parents who may need alternative communication arrangements</i></p>

<p>6. Welcoming new students and helping them to settle in effectively</p> <p>Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to find school intimidating, strange or inaccessible, and to move mid-year difficult, the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ensures a happy start at normal times by induction days and a nurturing group programme of pre-transfer visits.</i> • <i>part of TAs brief to act as a 'listening ear'.</i> • <i>has a Behaviour Support Manager who supports challenging students alongside the Pastoral Team.</i> • <i>has a student support unit known as 'Stepping Stones'.</i> • <i>has a Learning Support Manager who has a brief to monitor vulnerable students across the curriculum and communicate concerns to Head of Learning Support for action.</i> • <i>ensures effective school transfer and induction mid-year by the use of visits, buddies and sensitive form tutoring;</i> • <i>ensures that extra help is given to students who find a change of school challenging through invitation to the Summer School and by being met each morning and taken to registration by a TA.</i> • <i>ensures well-planned school adjustments are made to cater for a child with disabilities - if possible in advance of starting at the school by the secondary SEN Coordinator (SENCO) attending all yr 6 annual reviews and arranging extra visits when necessary.</i> • <i>Close links with the LA Support Services address student needs in advance of transfer and constant involvement informs any ongoing necessary modifications or alterations to provision.</i> 	
<p>7. Addressing the full range of learning needs</p> <p>Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to under-achieve, the school :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ensures curriculum is relevant by organising a range of small group interventions to improve literacy and numeracy skills and modify behaviour and to address vulnerable student needs if and when appropriate.</i> • <i>has a Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator to meet the needs of this group of students.</i> • <i>ensures appropriate teaching styles and classroom organisation through staff training e.g.</i> 	<p><i>Continue to develop provision management to establish effective analysis and development of interventions</i></p>

	<p><i>differentiation and classroom behaviour management.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ensures planning is based on earlier learning e.g. regular testing and good record keeping across all departments.</i> • <i>shares good practice.</i> • <i>tracks pupil progress and identifies under- performing students through its regular progress checks; and comparisons with Fisher Family Trust (FFT) data.</i> • <i>promotes and maintains higher attendance by the appointment of an Attendance Officer who liaises with the AEO.</i> 	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Supporting learners with particular needs</p> <p>Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to have particular needs, the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>provides distance learning for children out of school by the use of appropriate web based materials, work sent by departments and some home tuition.</i> • <i>prepares Personal Education Plans to focus on learning priorities for Children in Care.</i> • <i>provides Basic Skills support through in-class TA, intervention groups and Key Skills lessons and ‘drop in’ facility within Learning Support offering ICT basic skills programmes for literacy and numeracy at break and lunchtimes.</i> • <i>ensures language support is available as required through EMAS;</i> • <i>supports students through tutoring/mentoring schemes such as e-motivate, peer mentors, and the Reach Up team.</i> • <i>provides concessions for public examinations to meet a range of learning, physical, sensory and behavioural difficulties.</i> • <i>provides Homework/Revision support departmentally.</i> • <i>provides appropriate training to enable staff to meet particular learning needs such as training from advisory teachers e.g. for students with ASD, physical, sensory, behaviour and medical needs.</i> 	<p>Access more additional support for students with EAL.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Making the school accessible to all</p> <p>The school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>meets the needs of students, staff and others with physical and or sensory disabilities by</i> 	<p><i>Advice from LA on physical access to upper floors for wheelchair users who are unable to use ‘evac chair’ evacuation procedure is that they should at all times be accommodated on</i></p>

<p><i>providing designated toilets, purpose built fully equipped medical rooms and adaptations made to buildings in the form of ramps, lifts, carpeted areas and signage.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>arranges transport through the LA for students with disabilities;</i> • <i>meets the needs of students by appropriate seating arrangements in classrooms i.e. for hearing impaired, vision impaired or physically disabled students.</i> • <i>ensures that curricular and extra-curricular opportunities are available for pupils with disabilities by assessing access issues.</i> • <i>identifies further developments by keeping in regular touch with representatives of disability groups in order to update provision.</i> 	<p><i>the ground floor.</i></p>
<p>10. Ensuring fair and equal treatment for staff and others</p> <p>Recognising that the school needs to ensure that its policies and practice does not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against adults as well as pupils in the school and that positive role models and a wider perspective will strengthen it, the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ensures non-discriminatory recruitment and employment practices in line with current legislation.</i> • <i>promotes dignity at work and has adopted the OCC Dignity at Work policy.</i> • <i>encourages the development of all staff by an active staff development programme.</i> 	
<p>11. Encourage participation of under-represented groups</p> <p>Recognising that the school has an opportunity to model empowerment of all groups including disabled, ethnic, religious and socially and economically disadvantaged groups, the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>recruits governors representative of the student population and/or community.</i> • <i>encourages the widest participation in Lark Rise activities by running events that appeal to a cross section of the school community e.g. Barn Dance, Quiz Evening and Craft Fair.</i> • <i>supports individuals and community groups to express their case on matters affecting themselves and their community through newsletters, invitations to speak in assemblies, through distribution of previously agreed information and school representation e.g. Return</i> 	

	<i>from Iraq Parade.</i>	
12.	<p>Monitoring and Evaluating the policy</p> <p>Recognising that the strength of this policy depends upon ensuring that everyone is actively implementing it and that gaps and the need for further development will arise from effective evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>governors will review annually alongside the Access Plan.</i> 	<p><i>Train all staff and governors in disability legislation</i></p> <p><i>Continue to consult pupils, parents and staff on how the policy is working and how it could be improved.</i></p> <p><i>Will monitor and review practice.</i></p> <p><i>Will carry out impact assessments to evaluate practice by considering the issues identified through the involvement of disabled students, staff and parents together with the information held by the school. Any changes will be reflected in the school self evaluation form (SEF).</i></p> <p><i>Will report to governors</i></p> <p><i>Will report on disability aspects to parents and pupils through Lark Rise, the newsletter, website and school prospectus. The Scheme is available on request from school.</i></p>